ON SCENE

THE NATIONAL MARITIME SAR REVIEW

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

U. S. COAST GUARD

ISSUE NO. 3–76

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ENTRAPMENT UNDER OVERTURNED HULLS (CONTD.)

In the 6-75 issue of this publication we related two separate incidents of the survival of persons caught in air pockets under overturned hulls. Another such incident has been reported to us by the Coast Guard Marine Safety Office in Tampa, Florida.

In this case an outboard motorboat with nine persons on board capsized in Tampa Bay. All but two of the occupants were thrown clear of the boat. Two small girls, aged 6 and 4, were trapped under the hull in an air pocket near the bow. Both were wearing personal flotation devices (life-preservers) and were able to converse with persons outside the hull for most of the ordeal. One of the persons outside the hull made some attempts to swim underneath and rescue the children, but he was unsuccessful. The boat had a canvas top which got in the way, and he was unable to hold his breath long enough to reach the children.

After approximately one hour, a fishing vessel came alongside and was able to right the overturned boat. Tragically, one of the youngsters had apparently shifted her position to the stern of the boat and had stopped breathing. Artifical respiration proved unsuccessful. There were no other casualties, thanks to the fact that all were wearing PFDs.

We are grateful to MSO Tampa for forwarding this report to us, and again ask our readers to mail in narratives of any similar cases that they may know of. Our purpose is to print these accounts in ON SCENE so that our readers who become involved in such cases may know what might occur. Some things our last article and this one demonstrate are:

(a) The amount of air entrapped under an overturned hull is frequently adequate to sustain life for an extended period.

(b) Rescue of the entrapped persons is usually difficult.

(c) Divers are very useful if available.

(d) Communication through the hull is usually possible.

ON SCENE is a SAR publication published by the Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard as a source of information concerning current and proposed procedures as well as new developments in SAR. Articles contained herein are non-record and non-directive.

210' WMEC EXTREME COLD WEATHER OPERATIONS

By CDR C.A. GRUEL

Editors Note:

This letter was sent from CDR GRUEL to his operational commander, CCGD17. Printed here is the verbatim text of the letter.

This letter is sent for the following reasons:

a. To inform the operational Commander of the difficulties encountered with extreme cold weather operation of 210' WMEC's.

b. To preserve present knowledge/experience intact so others will not have to "re-invent the wheel".

c. Because many of the difficulties mentioned do not appear to be ship-peculiar and probably will apply to 378' WHEC's as well as 180' Buoy tenders.

Defining extreme cold weather operationally is usually subject to interpretation and judgement. For a 210' WMEC, whenever outside air temperatures are below 20°F, some of the difficulties listed become apparent. I consider outside air temperatures lower than 10°F at sea to be within the definitional range of extreme cold weather; as a point of reference, temperatures as low as minus eight (-8°F) degrees Fahrenheit were experienced by CONFIDENCE near the Shumagin Islands, Gulf of Alaska on 22 March 1975.

For ease in reference, the effects of extreme cold weather ship operation is organized into six general areas of effects. Some

effects cross these artificial boundaries and are listed under each catagory heading.

ENGINEERING:

a. Boilers. The care and feeding of the ship's boilers becomes critical to prevent freezing damage to various parts of the ship. During extreme cold weather operations, both boilers are run so that failure of one boiler will not leave the ship without heat even momentarily. Associated or boiler depedent cold weather problem areas are:

(1) The 5 steam pre-heaters will freeze and burst in less than 10 minutes elapsed time from loss of steam pressure at the boiler unless each is quickly and completely drained of all condensed steam. On CONFIDENCE, a fast action engineering group is "drilled" at servicing all 5 pre-heaters within less than 10 minutes. Repair costs per pre-heater are about $350.

(2) The internal hot water recirculating system which furnishes internal heating to the ship normally has an operating temperature of about 150 degrees F. When anticipating extreme cold weather operations, this temperature is raised to between 170 and 180 degrees F.

(3) Before sailing whenever extreme cold weather is a possibility, all steam traps are checked and repaired or replaced to ensure no area in the steam system has sluggish condensate return which is very likely to freeze and burst the pipe.

b. All required stores of lube or other oils must be inboard before sailing. As a practical matter, any 55 gallon drum storage of oils topside renders them unusable at temperatures lower than 20 degrees F. It is impossible to strike lube oil below without first pre-heating the entire drum at these temperatures; bringing a 55 gallon drum of lube oil up to internal ship ambient temperature will require 15-24 hours internal stowage.

c. The sea water supply to the main diesel engines intercoolers is reduced by operating the stop valves as throttling valves when sea water temperatures below about 40 degrees F are experienced.

d. A "special bill" to prevent fire main riser or topside valve freezeup is necessary to go around IMMEDIATELY after securing the fire pump and ensure each valve and riser is fully and completely drained. This is mandatory after each fire main pressurization. Some help is realized by pressuring only selected zones of the system but all must be checked to ensure no isolating valve leakage occured.

e. The small boats must receive daily intensive care in extreme cold weather or they will not start at all. Special care involves fitting each engine water jacket with a jacket heater and ensuring it works all the time; keeping a trickle charger attached to each boat battery and energizing it at all times that the boat is not in use. An aid to starting is a high capacity electric space heater with blower that can be placed in the boat about an hour before boat ops with the engine cover flap over the heater discharge to direct the hot air directly on the engine and trap it within the engine cover. Also, do not neglect to keep several cans of starting fluid (it used to be called Ether) available onboard just in case.

f. The entire water washdown system must be drained and checked well before any cold weather period else pipe and fitting loss from freezing is a certainty. Also, the six cut-out valves between the fire main and the washdown system usually have some leakage. These valves must be checked and repaired as necessary to ensure that fire main use does not result in

leaked water entering the exposed washdown system piping.

HULL (Deck):

a. Keep a good supply of snow shovels and axe handles available onboard for snow or ice removal from hull/deck areas. Topside general cleanliness is especially important on the forecastle, flight deck and main deck areas as it is a much more difficult job to remove snow or ice when the deck is cluttered with lines, fenders or miscellaneous gear. The general winter rule is keep everything not absolutely required topside below decks until needed; break it out for use then replace it below decks.

b. An unusual phenomenon occasionally occurs before general topside icing where the spray on deck will pass normally into the scuppers but will freeze near the scupper outlets at the waterline. The resulting ice block in the drain line will cause any further deck drainage to back up the line,

with the final result being non-hazardous but annoying minor flooding of internal spaces. This occurs through the small drain lines from the air conditioning condensate pans in recirculating units which are usually piped directly into the nearest scupper drain. Any space below the main deck which has an installed recirculating unit is subject to this back flooding unless someone has installed a manual stop valve in the drain line.

c. Extreme cold weather will cause complete freezing of the peak tank. If the tank were completely topped off or even 95 per cent, the resultant expansion may rupture the tank.

d. Sea water temperatures below 28 degrees F are encountered in Woman's Bay in wintertime. Any fresh water internally in the ship below the waterline will freeze under these conditions. This can cause troubles in bilges, bilge drainage piping, check valves, eductors, etc. It can also cause part of the anchor chain to become frozen into the bottom of the chain locker due to rain water or snow drainage into the chain locker.

e. Any paint stocks in the paint locker are subject to being frozen with resultant loss of paint quality. Only the minimum necessary paint stocks should be on hand in this area in the winter to avoid the financial loss involved.

Editors Note:

The following paragraph describes operations in ice which CGC CONFIDENCE has been able to accomplish without experiencing hull damage. These limits should not be accepted as what a 210 WMEC can routinely do but only what can be accomplished under optimum ice conditions and while using extreme caution.

f. The entire boot-topping area will require repainting each spring due to paint loss caused by operation in Woman's Bay (or any other internal bay which has frozen over). A 210' WMEC can successfully negotiate up to 10 inch sheet

ice but the operation is slow, has risk of propeller blade damage if backing down is required and can quickly put the ship "in irons" if a strong wind is present since turning while cutting/breaking your way through sheet ice is slow and difficult. The 210' WMEC will NOT "twist" with engines/rudder while in sheet ice thicker than 2 to 4 inches. If a sharp turn is required at slow speeds, it is necessary to back up, reinsert the stem into the sheet ice, cut a new track, back out and repeat as often as necessary to get around. If the wind is strong and unfavorable to your turn, the only recourse is a "poor man's tug", the use of an anchor to pivot. If the sheet ice forms while a 210' WMEC is alongside a pier, ship cannot be sprung out with sheet ice thicker than about 4 inches. If not clear to just back straight down the berth to clear water, it will be necessary for another ship (a 180' Buoy tender perhaps) to come close alongside to break up the sheet ice for your departure. If the sheet ice is tough and hard, a 210' WMEC may find it nearly impossible to approach a pier close enough for the brow to reach without the assistance of another vessel to break up the ice first. This is especially true if the ice has caked and been blown into a jumble of frozen together cakes near the pier.

g. The pilot house is a particular problem in extreme cold. The installed "defoggers" for the pilot house window interiors are only designed to clear off windows and become ineffective when extreme temperatures of less than about 15 degrees F are encountered. Under these conditions, frost forms on the window inside surfaces requiring someone to make continuous rounds of windows scraping off the frost. (plastic credit card works well in a pinch). Ambient temperature within the pilot house is also a problem. If closed up to allow for warmth, window frosting is accelerated. If a door is opened to create a draft, warm, moist interior air is brought up from below and window control is impossible. If a movable window is lowered to bring in cold, dry air, window frost is reduced but the temperature gets too low for comfort. I have not determined any satisfactory mode of operation under these circumstances, except to put an additional seaman on watch to scrape windows.

h. One of the major problems with 210'WMEC cold weather operation is the hydraulic boat davits. When temperatures are in the 20's, davit operation is sluggish, but the davits will usually work. When temperatures decrease to 15° F, one or the other davit will usually not work; sometimes, repeated cycling of the control handle will result in davit operation after 4 or 5 minutes. When temperatures decrease below 10°F, the davits will NOT work. This represents a significant loss of capability both for normal ALPAT operations and also for overall vessel safety. Finally, it means that the boats cannot be jettisoned in extreme cold weather unless the need is so severe that one is willing to accept the risks of dropping the boat overside from its cradle by releasing the rottmer gear. My opinion is that the cause of davit failure is due to increased viscosity of the hydraulic fluid which prevents oil from flowing through the hydraulic control blocks (which, as I understand them function as flow regulating devices and essentially throttle the flow through internal valves). This problem has two sides; if the temperature falls while a boat is overside, it may also be impossible to recover the davits inboard, requiring the boat to be carried overside and griped into the deck edge. I have not noted any cold weather effect on the boat hoisters themselves other than occasional malfunction of the friction brake due to icing. This usually manifests itself as an inability to hold the boat in a hoisted position as the brake band

slips on the drum and the boat slowly lowers itself.

OPERATIONS (OPS Dept):

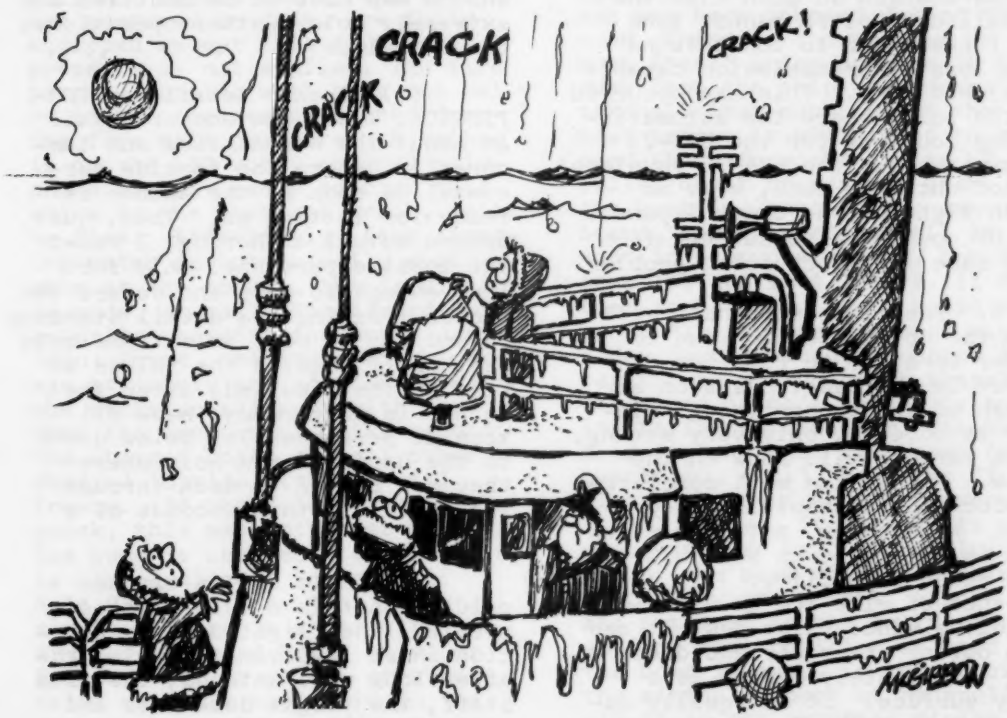
a. Extreme cold weather will cause interior fogging of the cover plate for the magnetic compass and of the mirrors in the periscope from the pilot house. This has not been curable on CONFIDENCE but occurs only in extreme cold weather (near zero or below) so has not often been a problem. Operationally, this removes the magnetic compass as a check on or backup for the gyro compass.

b. The running lights are left on full time during extreme cold weather to prevent any fogging of bulb covers or lenses. Such internal condensation or fogging has occurred but is preventable by leaving all normal running lights energized.

c. The "big eyes" binoculars are a worthwhile addition for ALPAT but become unusable at temperatures below about 25 degrees. The primary problem is that because the entire binocular is cold, including the optics, whenever anyone attempts to use them, the warmth from the face or even just the eyes causes the lenses to quickly fog over. Ventilation holes in the rubber eyepieces might prevent this but has not yet been tried.

d. The gyro compass repeaters as well as the pitch/rpm gauges in the bridge wing consoles also usually fog internally in extreme cold rendering them useless. The telescopic alidades are kept in the pilot house and usually retain enough warmth for use for one or two minutes. If they are left on the bridge wing for any period of time, however, the warmth from your eye will cause their optics to fog as well.

e. Internal sweating or frost accumulation on any metal, non-insulated part is a minor problem



throughout the ship but is especially so within the mast. In minor cold periods, if the internal access door from the bridge is left open or if the door seal is ineffective, the bare walls of the mast interior will sweat large quantities of water out of the interior air causing a good sized puddle to form on deck. In colder periods, frost will form throughout the mast interior surfaces which will make the interior ladder very slippery.

ELECTRONICS:

a. Extreme cold weather will often cause rime ice to form on antenna insulators and on the microwave transparent fiberglass cover on the radar antenna's. In the first case, reduced reception of all frequencies except VHF-FM is noted with one of the more serious losses being in the loran sets. Another side of this problem is that if enough rime ice forms, the antenna characteristics may be changed so much that the installed couplers cannot tune the transmitter to the antenna with loss of transmission capability resulting. This has occurred to the point where the automatic-tuning couplers for the URT-23 transmitters, (the URA-38 couplers) cannot obtain a tune, e.g. no green light on the control panel. The MF coupler also suffers from this same insulator icing problem.

b. The radar antenna's will also ice up on occasion due to either spray or to rime ice. The effect is the same. As soon as enough of the transmitting "window" is covered, only very strong, close targets will show on the scope. Enough ice will completely block out transmission/reception. Apparently, not much thickness is necessary to seriously reduce radar capability. The occurrence of rime ice is especially insidious since, like dew, it can form out of clear air and doesn't show immediately except as a shiny surface. It is equally damaging to antenna insulators or radar antenna "window" operation as freezing spray; however its growth is usually slow. On CONFIDENCE, we have cleared ice from antenna insulators on occasion, but have not attempted to clear rime ice from the radar antenna due to fear that attempts to remove ice may damage the fiberglass cover.

c. The radar antennas can also freeze up if stopped in extreme cold weather. For this reason, we always leave both antennas rotating continuously in cold weather with only one radar energized for transmission at a time.

PERSONNEL:

a. Personal exposure to extreme cold weather is well enough documented and the hazards of frostbite, frozen limbs and adherence of exposed skin to extremely cold metal is generally well known by all hands. However, several normal operations for 210' WMEC's may have to be modified for extremely cold weather operations; these include:

(1) Anchor Detail; on CONFIDENCE, I set the anchor detail at about the normal time but temporarily secure the topside personnel as soon as the anchor is ready for letting go. Then, just before actual anchoring, I reset the topside personnel only for long enough to drop and secure the anchor. During sea detail standing in and out of port in extreme cold weather, I require the talker to stay on the line and, after the anchor is made ready, have all topside personnel lay below decks to the upper bosn's hole where they can return to deck through the scuttle within seconds of a call.

(2) Helo OPS in extreme cold weather is a multifaceted problem. The flight deck preparation phase involving lowering the after long wire antenna, the flag staff, the flight deck nets and after stanchions is usually espe-

cially hazardous due to slippery decks. When necessary, this activity is started early using a "two-platoon" system where one team works for 5 or 10 minutes while the other is inside warming up, then switching teams. Supervisory care is especially important to ensure no one removes a mitten or glove to grab hold of a cold metal part. If necessary, work life jackets may be prescribed for flight deck preparation teams. The air operation phase has its own problems due to increased wind from the rotor wash further chilling the men (a more severe chill factor). However, so far, I have maintained the required manning of LSO, talker, net men, fire parties and boat crew topside and at their stations. The net men do not actually enter the nets overside until the Helo is on final to save the extra exposure minutes. The small boat is lowered to the rail overside and the boat crew mans the boat (except when the temperature is so low that the davits will not work). The fireparties are mustered on deck, are fully equipped except that fire main pressure is not applied. The fire pump is running with only one valve in the engineroom closed denying fire main pressure. A talker is on the LSO sound powered telephone circuit ready to open this valve in the event of crash, spill or fire. Effectively, fire fighting water is not actually available at the nozzle, but is within seconds, on call. The hazards of actually charging the hoses are twin; first, the inevitable leakage at joints and nozzles makes the decks so slippery with ice that the men cannot walk; second, the charged hoses and all other charged topside fittings will freeze. If the Helo operation is quick, this may not occur before the pump is secured and everything is back drained. However, if Helo OPS last more than 10 to 15 minutes, there is a definite hazard of a frozen hose, burst or frozen riser or valve, or burst valve or riser elsewhere in the system that robs the fire party of pressure. There is also the problem that the Helo wheel grating may be partially filled with ice or snow. The flight deck is probably ice coated in any period of extreme cold weather. Besides the hazard to personnel trying to walk on it, there is hazard to landing the Helo. The hazard is that while the ship may be within roll/pitch parameters, if the deck is slippery with ice, the machine may start to slide around before the tie-down crew can get it secured and the pilot may want to pull out. The Helo control officer or LSO should discuss this with the pilot before landing and agree on a procedure or signal for this case.

(3) Any small boat operation in extremely cold weather is a triple threat. First is the cold problem of personal exposure. Second is the cold induced problems of stiff lines, slippery boat and ship decks and the inevitable tendency of all hands to hurry the operation so the deck personnel can get back inboard out of the cold. Third is the problem of the boat itself icing up once it is away from the ship. It doesn't take all that much ice on the small boat before it will start to exceed the safe working load of the falls, davit or rottmer gear. If the boat is launched for man-overboard, speed (read haste!) is foremost in everyone's mind, hence troubles are most likely. If the boat is launched for a boarding on ALPAT, remember to send along a dry jacob's ladder wrapped in a bag to use on the other vessel. A well-iced jacob's ladder is an invitation to disaster. Unless the need for the boat is urgent (man-overboard, etc.), have the First LT try the davits before everyone is all ready. If the davits won't work, another way not involving use of the boat will be required. If the davits do work, ensure they are returned to the fully retracted (inboard) position as soon as the boat is away. In this position, the minimal amount of hydraulic oil is in the external piping or

davit rams and you have a better chance of using the davits again when the boat returns. If davit operation during lowering was marginal, have someone work them back and forth a few cycles every 5 or 10 minutes to free them up while the boat is away.

b. Ensure enough Arctic foul weather gear including boots, insulated trousers, parkas, face masks and gloves is onboard to be able to at least fully outfit the entire deck force at once. If severe hull/topside icing is encountered, enough men will have to be out topside beating ice to make the effort worthwhile; this minimum number should be near 30 percent of total crew strength.

c. Extreme cold weather will create some interesting and probably unforseen problems. Certainly, most people will anticipate that food consumption by the crew will increase due to increased energy expenditure by personnel topside. However, garbage/trash disposal is a problem. Anything that does not hit the water when thrown overside ends up being worn by the hull until the spring thaw! This includes all contributions whether to weather or lee made by seasick persons as well as oily slops from the engineroom!

GENERAL:

a. A minor hazard topside exists from the ice cover being dislodged from antennas, halyards, mast, yardarms, railings, etc. higher than you are. Most of these are not large enough to do more than sting but an eye could be lost if timing is bad. Personnel on the bridge wings and boat decks are especially subject to being hit.

b. When temperatures are below zero, some internal ship water systems may freeze although boilers are in operation and the ship is comfortable. Especially vulnerable are the fresh water pipes serving the two after stateroom heads on the 01 Deck and the lines to the watchstander's head on the 02 Deck. These froze hard enough to block water flow to the faucets but not hard enough to burst the pipes during an overnight period when the outside temperature dropped from 12 above to 8 below zero, then recovered to zero by dawn.

c. Although I have not had occasion to try them, there is some doubt in my mind whether the 15 man inflatable life rafts would work properly if needed in zero or below temperatures.

LIAISON WITH REPORTING PARTY

A recent article in the CCGD Nine SAR Newsletter touches on a subject of importance to the entire SAR Community. We are reprinting it here for the benefit of our readers:

"Several recent Congressional inquiries handled by the Search and Rescue Branch have been from reporting parties who had a misconception of the actions taken by the Coast Guard in their respective cases.

"In general, each of these cases was properly handled, with one exception. The reporting party was not advised of Coast Guard action being taken. As a result they were given a false impression of our response.

[District directives require] you to 'regularly check back with the reporting party to solicit new information.' While you're seeking information, pass some in the other direction. This will help settle the reporting party's nerves and indicate to him that we are genuinely concerned and taking action."

Do you have questions concerning SAR? If so...

"ASK ALBERT"

Do you have a question concerning SAR? If so, then "Ask Albert." This is a SAR question and answer column, prepared by the staff of the National Search and Rescue School. If you have a question concerning SAR procedures, techniques, operations, organization, or administration, then address your question to: ALBERT ALBATROSS, National Search and Rescue School, Governors Island, New York, N.Y. 10004

Hi, Fat Albert,

If survivors, in a liferaft or boat were picked up at a known latitude and longitude one or more days after the vessel had sunk, would it be possible for SARP or CASP to retrace to the approximate incident position if sinking information is given?

QMC J.A. ARNQUIST
San Francisco RCC

Dear Chief ARNQUIST,

I presume you were addressing me, although the adjective "FAT" does not match my physical characteristics.

The answer to your question is a definite "YES...but." Our computer systems do not currently have that capability, at least not directly. However, there is an indirect way that you might be able to arrive at a close approximation of an initial distress position after the location of a search target. It will require actual observed environmental data (wind observations and DMB readings) for the period of drift, and some pencil and paper work. It is easier done by SARP than CASP.

For a SARP run, input the following in the appropriate blocks:

INCIDENT TIME - enter the known distress time.
INCIDENT POSITION - the position at which the survival craft was located.
DATUM TIME - the time the survival craft was located.
X = Ø, Y = Ø.
TYPE OF LEEWAY - appropriate for survival craft. If code F is used, enter appropriate sector, multiplier, and exponent.

Enter the number of surface wind observations and list the observations, making sure that the RECIPROCAL of the observed direction is entered.

Enter the number of DMB observations again ensuring that the RECIPROCAL of the observed drift direction is entered.

The SARP datum should be a fairly accurate reconstruction of the distress position, conditioned by the accuracy of the observed data which you use. The Total Probable Error of Position (E) value will represent an error circle around the reconstructed distress position equal to the computed standard drift error.

I had my friends at the National SAR School and the AMVER Center test this procedure on two of the canned problems which are used in SARP training. Both tests showed that the procedure works.

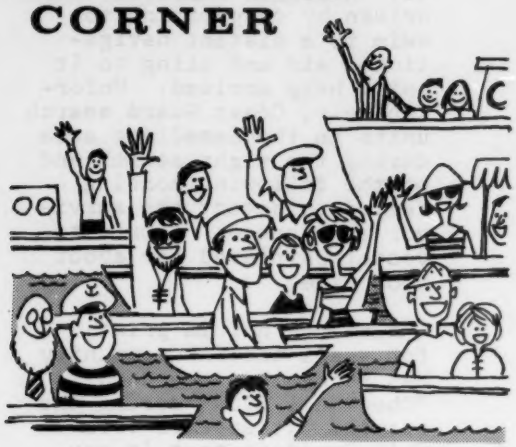
But, what about out in the real world? I think there is limited practicality. For one thing, you will probably never have the exact environmental data needed, without which your WAG on the distress position will be as good as the computer's. Secondly, the data which you will need will have to be observed throughout the entire drift period. Let's assume your target is from a boat which sank on Day 1 and you search for 10 days and then suspend, having recorded the observed wind and surface current information throughout the period of search. On Day 20, the raft is located by another unit. Can you reconstruct an accurate distress position? Not with only half of the necessary data. Sure, you can come up with a pretty good idea, but you won't be able to measure the accuracy.

Here is how one RCC used this procedure with successful results: A Fishing Boat sank on Wednesday and survivors were located and recovered from a life-boat on Friday, but three additional POB in another life-boat were still missing. The original distress position was in doubt and debriefing of the survivors didn't help much either. So, the Controller, using what little data that was available, had SARP back-drift the life-boat which had been located back to the time of sinking to reconstruct the sinking position. Then he made a CASP run applying 30% value to the position at which the first life-boat was located and a 70% value to the reconstructed distress position. That scenario was drifted for Saturday's search. The missing life-boat was located within CASP's area of second highest probability. The Controller stated that had CASP not been available, it is probable that that area would not have been searched until much later in the search effort.

NATIONAL SAR PLAN--20th Anniversary

In this bi-centennial year, we in Search and Rescue have another special milestone to celebrate. It was 20 years ago on 30 March 1956 that the original National SAR Plan became effective after years of effort by the then-existing Air Coordinating Committee. Subsequent revisions of the plan retained the substance of the 1956 document, making only such changes as were necessary to keep the plan up to date with changing times. The most recent changes to the current plan will appear in Amendment 2 to the National SAR Manual which will be distributed in the near future.

KUDOS CORNER



To: Officer in Charge CG Station
Rehobeth Beach, MD

I would like to extend my thanks for the response you made to a call referring to a capsized boat.....Fortunately we had spotted the craft.....and provided assistance. Had we not been there, your arrival would certainly have aborted the worsening of the situation. Your quick response was a clear demonstration to us....that "our" Coast Guard and the protective umbrella you provide in time of peril are ever ready.....
/s/ Richard W. Wright

To: Commander 1st Coast Guard
District

Recently I found it necessary to ask the Coast Guard to help me fulfil the most unusual "constituent request".....A trawler-borne constituent.....radioed me ship-to-shore for aid. Somehow, I was to help him untangle his fishing gear and a heavy chain which was fouling his propeller...It was through the extra efforts of three men....and of the combined crews of your ships DECISIVE and POINT BONITA, that the rescue of my constituent was accomplished.....I am writing to thank the Coast Guard. .....and to commend these three officers: CAPT Bernard A. HOYLAND and LT Paul J. BIBEAU in Boston, and CDR William P. LEAHY, Jr., CO of the cutter DECISIVE. With patience and thoroughness, Captain HOYLAND and Lieutenant BIBEAU kept me constantly informed about the progress ....even to the extent of dealing with the matter during off-duty hours....Commander LEAHY....effectively directed his men and made the proper, operational decisions necessary for this success.....I know that the services's reputation for excellence and responsiveness is well-deserved, and I feel that (they) and the men of the DECISIVE and POINT BONITA have contributed greatly to forwarding that reputation...../s/ Christopher J. Dodd, Member of Congress

To: Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard

We wish to call to your attention the exemplary performance of a Coast Guard team...of the small boat Station at Thomas Point, MD ...we, with three children aboard were reported overdue.....A search ....found us at 1:30 A.M. at anchor in the Bay.....unable to return to our harbor...due to the high winds and a malfunctioning motor.....CG41311, commanded by Coxswain D.H. Shultis and with Messers D.M. Jackson, G.E.Dennis and G.F. Lowe aboard, handled the situation masterfully. Taking us aboard in rough seas, crewman Lowe was put on our small sailboat to prepare it for towing and to man the tiller while under tow - a task which lasted well over an hour in sub-freezing weather. Despite the very late hour,.....all were unfailingly courteous, efficient, and unusually helpful.....
/s/ Robert T. Hennemeyer and Theodore Sellin, (Department of State officials)

CHECK ALL ATON

A district commander recently sent a letter to all his SAR units reiterating an old SAR technique that has proven very valuable over the years. For those of our readers who are not connected with the Coast Guard, but occasionally engage in overwater searches a brief explanation is required. "ATON" is an acronym for "Aids to Navigation," such as buoys, beacons, lighthouses, etc., placed in the water or on the coast to help the mariner navigate. As this letter points out, those aids in the water are occasionally used by victims of boat casualties as something to hang on to, until help arrives. The letter is quoted in its entirety herewith:

> "A recent boating tragedy has demonstrated that what many of us take for granted as "standard operating procedure (SOP)" is in fact just that - taken for granted. In this particular case, three persons perished. A fourth survived when driven by desperation to swim to a distant navigational aid and cling to it until help arrived. Unfortunately, Coast Guard search units in the immediate area during the night search and on the following morning failed to detect the survivor's presence. A private vessel retrieved her about noon time.
>
> "Although not in print, for years the SAR community has recognized the need to "Check all ATON" during the search. It appears from this incident that it may no longer be "SOP". Therefore, all Commanding Officers and Officers-in-Charge of SAR units shall give this letter the widest dissemination to SAR crews and include it in written "standing orders" or unit training programs."

Distribution (SDL No. 102)

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